

HUMBUG

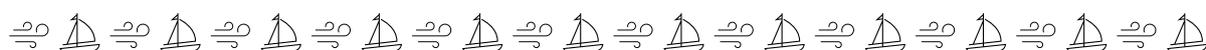
Greenwich Flying Squadron



January 2026



Cover photo by Ken Gibson, Serendipity.



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2026 Sailing Season Dates

| Year | Month | Day | Date | Event |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|--|
| 2026 | January | Wednesday | 21 | Australia Day Twilight race |
| | | Saturday | 24 | Australia Day weekend – No racing |
| | | Monday | 26 | 190 th Australia Day Regatta Sydney Harbour |
| | | Wednesday | 28 | Next women’s helm race |
| | | Saturday | 31 | Sail Safe day |
| | February | Saturday | 7 | Autumn Saturday race 1 |
| | | Wednesday | 11 | Autumn twilight race 1 |
| | | Friday | 13 | Sydney Pride Regatta – RANSA |
| | Feb - Mar | Sat-Sun | 28-1 | Sydney Harbour Sail GP |
| | March | | 7-8 | Sydney Harbour Regatta - MHYC |
| | | | 13 | 13-18 Sail Port Stephens |
| | April | | 1 | Last Twilight series race (8) |
| | May | Saturday | 4 | Easter weekend – no racing |
| | | Sunday | 5 | Daylight savings ends |
| | | Saturday | 25 | Last Saturday series race 8 |
| | | Sunday | 31 | First West Harbour race* |
| | June | Saturday | 6 | Prize presentations from 3 PM |
| July | Tuesday | 7 | AGM 7.30 PM at the clubhouse | |

* Entry required minimum of 2 hours before race 1. (Though not recommended to leave that late 😊)

Did you know that the Australia Day Regatta is the world’s oldest continuously run annual sailing regatta?



Commodore's Column

Steve Bradley: Commodore

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year and is looking forward to more sailing at GFS in 2026.

GFS provides the boat for Santa at the Wharf on Christmas day. This year I had the privilege to drive the boat and deliver Santa and his Elves to Greenwich Wharf. Seeing the excitement and delight on the faces of all the kids was a great way to start Christmas day.



Several exciting events are planned for the next couple of months that I would urge you to consider participating in. There is more detail elsewhere in this edition of Humbug but the key dates are:

- Wednesday 21 January Twilight Australia Day Race
- Wednesday 28 January is the next Twilight Women's helm race
- Saturday 31 January is the next Sail Safe day
- Friday 13 February is the Pride Regatta from RANSA

Have you considered entering the Saturday races at GFS? The fleet is much smaller than the Wednesday twilights and is a great opportunity to develop your skills while under less pressure.

Safety is always our highest priority and there has been excellent progress made by Roger Gee and the Safety Committee. There is more about this elsewhere, but I would like to emphasise our individual responsibility to safety. Always sailing within the capabilities of our crew and our boat is vital to a safe time on the water. Deciding to reef early, not start a race or to abandon if conditions deteriorate is vital to safety and I would urge you to always have these in mind

Finally I would like to thank all the committee members and volunteers who make sailing at GFS possible. It takes around 5,000 hours each year to run the club and I am constantly delighted by the willingness of our members to contribute. I have found that the more you put into the club the more you get out of it. So if you are considering stepping forward, please give me a ring on 0404 829 108 or Leigh McLaughlin on 0412 234 832 to chat about the opportunities. We are particularly looking for people to help in the Technology and Web space, so if you have some relevant skills please reach out.

I wish you safe and enjoyable sailing in 2026

Warm Regards, Steve Bradley ☺ ⚓

Sail GP

Sail GP will be coming to Sydney Harbour on 28 February and 1 March. In addition to the races consider going out on Friday 27 February to watch them practice when there will be fewer spectator boats and more opportunities to get close to these amazing machines. ☺ ⚓



Saturday Sailing

Saturday sailing is great (and the West harbour series on Sundays over winter)! While I love the excitement of racing on Wednesday nights and the comradery at BBQ afterwards there is something special about sailing on the weekend. Less traffic getting there, easier parking, lunch and a beer (mid strength 😊) before we go out, less congestion on the water, a fun banter between the boats and the choice/challenge of flying a spinnaker. You do not need to fly one, there are times when we also do not. Saturday sailing is a great way to wind down from the week!



We would love to see you there on a Saturday. 🌊 ⚓



GFS Twilights

pontoon ponderings



The story so far...

We're 11 races in, about halfway through the season, and we've had a true smorgasbord: gusty westerlies, some classic sea breezes, one nasty nor'easter, a drifter and one race that had it all.



The highs? Some fabulous racing and glorious BBQs; a bumper Xmas party (we ran out of tables *and* forks and had to raid Minnow's galley); and a fabulous start to the revamped Women's Helm Series.

The learnings? We've a way to go on safety. We've had one person-overboard, an accidental gybe injury, multiple collisions and many near-misses, resulting in 10 incident reports. We'll be running a 2nd 'Sail-Safe' Day on Saturday January 31 – join if you can. Please contact Ken Gibson – twilightcaptain@gfs.org.au or 0407 906 085 - if you'd like some more help on safe sailing or the rules.

It is great to see so many new, enthusiastic people at the club, and a few new boats. Please welcome them:



Myuna III is a Farr 1104. Our furry friend won best dressed at Xmas. He is the tactician, apparently. Jaime and the crew also have a fabulous stereo and will dance a victory salsa if asked nicely.

Carrera is a Northshore 38, kitted out for cruising, owned by Brett Odgers, who joined GFS in 2024. Brett has put together an enthusiastic crew.



He reckons he is still learning the secrets of Humbug. Who isn't?



Calypso is an Elan S3, co-owned by two Greenwich families: Alex O'Byrne and Tom Evens. Both returned to sailing several decades after learning as kids and have been crewing on other boats for the last two seasons. ☺ ⚓

Thank You Letter from The Lakes College (TLC)

On behalf of TLC, I can confidently say we had a wonderful time at YoTS on Yachts. The experience out on the water was fantastic, and every young person from our site reported that they thoroughly enjoyed themselves and would gladly do it all again. Judging by their stories, our students had an exhilarating and adventurous time on whichever boat they were assigned, relishing the chance to chip in and help their crew and craft reach the finish line.

On the drive back, the bus was alive with animated conversations about how much fun we'd had and how glad we were to have attended. Many of our young people were still buzzing with excitement the next morning, arriving at morning circle with tired but happy smiles on their faces, eager to share their stories with those who hadn't managed to attend. Their enjoyment was palpable, and the shared experiences most certainly appear to have strengthened the bonds and relationships among them.

Thank you for hosting YoTS on Yachts again this year. The event was outstanding, and we are deeply grateful for the hospitality and warmth shown to us by the yachting community. From the boat rides to the sunset, the smiling faces to the laughter, the organisation and generosity—it was all thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. The atmosphere was welcoming and friendly all night long, and the experience second to none.

The only complaint our kids voiced was about the breathtaking harbour views—not that they weren't spectacular, but that they were too nervous to take photos in case their phones ended up in the drink.

Many thanks once again. We can't wait to come back next year to do it all again.

Warm regards,

The staff and students at TLC

James Hart

Teacher Lakes College

Youth Off The Streets Limited

Darkinjung Country

1 Apsley Court Blue Haven ☞ ⚓



Women's Helm Update

Leigh McLaughlin (Vice Commodore)

It's time to get ready for race three in the Women's Helm Series on Wednesday 28 January. Good luck to all helmswomen and mentors. We hope to see around 20 boats participating.



The Women's Helm is our flagship event to encourage women skippers, but the Committee is keen to see more women getting into sailing and involved in running the Club overall.

Around 26 percent of our 493 members are women; we'd like to see that number increase in the coming years. This might involve learning to sail, joining a crew, gaining new skills or buying a boat. Or, it might involve volunteering in one of the many roles and tasks available at GFS, which is an excellent way to learn about sailing and get to know people.

Women, no matter age or experience, are invited to come along and have a go. Girls can join the Juniors program and learn the ropes from a young age.

Who knows? They might end up winning one of the world's greatest ocean races. The 2025 Sydney to Hobart was won by a boat called Min River, owned by female skipper Jiang Lin, who learned to sail at Balmain Sailing Club.

A recent example of how GFS supports women is that of Jane Bolster. Jane owns and skippers Kia Kaha in Orange Division. Jane did the hard yards getting her boat up to standard and is rapidly developing helming skills, thanks to the advice and support of Jim Lelliot and Harvey Porter who, between them, have many years of experience owning and racing boats. Thanks Harvey and Jim!

This is a great example of the support experienced GFS members are providing to women sailors and boat owners at GFS. Fantastic.

Let's focus on getting more women and girls on the water in 2026. 🌊 ⚓

Pride Regatta 2026 – One Harbour, One Start Line 🌈🚤

By Jorgen Kristoffersen, GFS Member

The Sydney Pride Regatta is back — bigger, brighter, and more colourful than ever. Last year, our inaugural event brought 13 yachts from across Sydney Harbour together for one shared celebration of Pride, inclusivity, and diversity in sailing. The vibe was friendly, relaxed, competitive, and absolutely electric.



Importantly for GFS, the very first boat to register for that inaugural regatta — and again for the 2026 Pride Regatta — was Restless, a Traditional 30 owned by our own Vice Commodore Leigh McLaughlin and her partner Margie Powell. That early show of support set the tone for what the regatta has become.



As Leigh puts it:

"I strongly support creating opportunities for people from under-represented groups to try sailing. The Pride Regatta makes a statement that says everyone is welcome. I'm looking forward to the race on the main harbour, and to the socialising afterwards."

Fast forward to 2026 and the momentum continues to build. We already have 18 yachts registered, with more expected, and Australian Sailing's Sail Our Way program is officially backing the regatta, recognising it as a key event for visibility and inclusion in our sport. Among those sailing are Meridian with our GFS Commodore Steve Bradley and Ros Bradley and crew.

Alongside our event sponsor **Helly Hansen**, and with support from **RANSA**, **Balmain Sailing Club**, **CYCA**, and **Pride in Sport**, we're creating something truly special on the water. The regatta runs as a Pride division within RANSA's Friday twilight race on **13 February**, with colourful boats, Pride flags flying, crews mixing and mingling, and racing that's fun, fair, and unforgettable. You don't need to identify as LGBTQ+ to join — allies, families, friends, and curious sailors are all warmly welcome.

From day one, GFS has been proud to support the Pride Regatta. As a member, I can honestly say it reflects exactly what makes GFS such a special club: a genuinely welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where everyone belongs. Not all clubs on

the harbour share that same vibe, which makes seeing GFS burgees flying on the Pride start line even more meaningful.

After racing, everyone heads ashore to the **Pride Regatta Village** next to RANSA for drinks, food, and plenty of post-race stories.

So whether you want to:

- Enter your boat
- Jump on as crew
- Cheer from the sidelines
- Or simply be part of something positive on the harbour

...it would be fantastic to see GFS burgees flying proudly on the start line once again.

👉 **More info & registrations:** www.prideregatta.com ⚓ ⚓

Rules Night Wrap Up

The Rules night held in October was a successful evening with great questions and discussion. Many thanks to everyone who participated. The presentation has now been updated and is available on this link: [Click Here](#). ⚓ ⚓



The Sabot Nationals - Airlie Beach

James Anderson, Junior Sailing

Over the Christmas break the Andersen family had the pleasure of participating in the 62nd Sabot National championships. These were hosted by the Whitsundays sailing club in Airlie Beach.



Over 3 weeks they drove 4,500km spending over 60 hours in the car together, dodged a cyclone, sailed for 6 days, chanted the Southern NSW chant every morning, made some new friendships and cemented others, all while visiting some amazing parts of the country.



Theo and Rupert Andersen both represented Southern NSW Zone with Theo sailing on behalf of Drummoyne Sailing club in the open fleet and Rupert the sole representative of Greenwich Flying Squadron in the Green fleet (Finishing 2nd overall).

They were among some 50 sailors and their families who travelled from as far away as Tasmania to compete. It was a great experience. The Andersen family on behalf of Vaucluse, Drummoyne and Lane cove clubs thanks GFS for providing a RIB to support the fleet. 🌊 ⚓



Safety Update

Roger Gee, Safety Officer

The past 3 months have been interesting and taxing. Weather has not been very nice on many occasions with winds over 20 kts. This has produced some accidents and near misses. There have been 10 incident reports submitted this season, ranging from a Man Overboard, head injury requiring hospitalisation, several collisions and near misses.

I should explain the new procedure as this has changed from previous years. When an incident occurs it is recommended you fill in an Incident Report form (Yellow Form), so GFS can maintain a record, plot trends and hopefully reduce the



likelihood of it happening again. The incident may require submitting a report to the Maritime if serious injury occurs, damage is more than \$5,000 or more than 10% of the vessel value or there is damage or risk to the environment. Both forms can be found on the GFS website.

Once a report is received it is distributed to the Safety and Risk Committee. If a Protest has been lodged then nothing will happen till that is heard. The Safety and Risk Committee meet quarterly or more frequently if required. The Committee then decides what action should be taken. It may require discussion with the skipper(s), publication of an article in Humbug or a change to procedures.

The Safety Training Day was held on the 29th November. It started with an hour's lecture followed by our courageous Twilight Captain jumping in the water and being rescued by the use of a sling. The day proved popular, unfortunately the wind was a bit too much to do the practical on board training. Instead we all climbed on board 2 boats and had useful discussions about safety. There will be another Sail Safe Day soon.

That's it from me. Safe Sailing 

A Few More Thoughts on Safety

By Leigh McLaughlin with input from the Safety and Risk Committee

As our Safety Officer Roger Gee has said, we've had several incidents so far this season.

Sailing can be risky and accidents happen, but our goal must always be to get everyone home safely at the end of every race. None of us want to spend time and money repairing damaged boats and we certainly don't want to see people injured in accidents on the water.

Incident Reporting

Incident reporting is giving us a better understanding of why collisions happen and it's clear that at least some are preventable. As a result, the *Twilight Weekly* has already included tips to help us all better maintain control of our boats. These have included: safe gybing, reefing in windier weather, handling winch overrides, monitoring conditions to allow us to predict and allow room for errors, and safety briefings for new crew members joining our boats.

The Club is proactive in providing education and information about safety. We provide several formal mechanisms, including the *Sailing Instructions*, the Skippers' Briefing, Rules Nights, and new initiatives such as our Sail Safe Days (next one 31 January). And don't forget the *Rules and Raves Table* after Twilights to allow discussion of any incidents in a friendly atmosphere.

It's also up to each of us as members to do our own reading, research and practice to develop our knowledge and skills in order to sail safely. Look out for the *Twilight Weekly* which always offers tips regarding some of the common rules that are misinterpreted or involved in incidents.

Vessel Audits

Members will have noticed we raised the bar in vessel auditing at the start of the season. The aim is to ensure a consistent and rigorous approach by auditors, requiring all safety issues to be rectified in order to be cleared to race.

Being a Vessel Auditor is a critical voluntary role for the Club and an excellent way to increase your own knowledge of safety issues and meet people.

Please consider doing the training and joining our pool of Auditors. (Currently we have no women on the team of auditors. GFS Women, please consider this.) Talk to Roger Gee for more info.

Safety and Risk Management

This season we have developed a Safety Management Manual and a Risk Register to guide the Club's actions. Members are encouraged to take a look at these documents <https://gfs.org.au/club-info/documents/> Feel free to send any feedback to me at vicecommodore@gfs.org.au and I will share it with the Safety and Risk Committee.

Club Information

Leigh McLaughlin, Vice Commodore

Members, did you know?

Most of us go to the GFS website to check the Racing Results, but did you know there's lots of useful info under *Club Information/Club Documents*?

<https://gfs.org.au/club-info/documents/> For example:

If you'd like to store your dinghy at the Clubhouse, visit the website to find out more. We have a limited number of places for tender storage for eligible financial (full) members.

The *GFS House Rules* have been updated regarding lithium batteries. If you have an electric outboard or other device, please **do not charge your battery in the Clubhouse, or leave your battery unattended in the Clubhouse**. It is a fire risk, and our insurance policy does not cover fires originating from lithium batteries. Please take a moment to read all the House Rules, as they contain important and useful information.

The Club has a mooring in Gore Creek. Financial (full) members can access it for occasional use for a fee. Contact John Veale if you'd like to know more:

john.veale@bigpond.com

Our bins are collected by a private contractor who visits by barge. The more time contractors spend separating waste, the more we pay. Please do the right thing and separate your rubbish. If you're working on your boat, please take E waste and hard rubbish home.

We have a Code of Conduct that sets out expectations for all of us and a Child Protection Policy to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who participate in GFS activities. Please take a moment to digest these important documents.

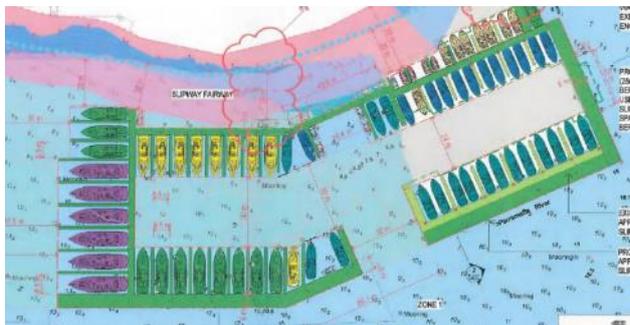
and please only enter the series in which you intend to sail.

To enter, go to – <https://app.sailsys.com.au/club/14/entry?tab=entry>

Woolwich Marina Court Decision

James Kearney, Secretary GFS

On 19 December 2025, the Land and Environment Court handed down judgment in the long running case about the proposed expansion of Woolwich Marina. The appeal by the developer was dismissed so it is a victory for the community organisations and Hunters Hill Council who opposed the development.



The original development application was lodged in July 2023. In February 2024, the Sydney North Planning Panel refused the development proposal. The developer then appealed to the Land and Environment Court.

The original plan saw the marina expansion extend south towards Cockatoo Island, significantly reducing the size of the already narrow waterway between Woolwich and Cockatoo Is. The GFS committee considered the plan adversely affected our sailing activities and GFS became one of 11 objectors to the plan. The other objectors included sailing clubs (Hunters Hill and Lane Cove), persons with interest in heritage issues (Friends of Kelly's Bush and Hunters Hill Trust), and local residents.

The original plan was later amended by the developer to re-orient the development so the marina expanded west (in front of Kellys Bush) and not south towards Cockatoo Is. In our view, this change reduced the navigation risks but did not eliminate them because the new marina proposed 44 new berths for boats

between 10m and 25m in length. The problem was the creation of a hard barrier in place of the existing swing moorings and the congestion of 25m boats entering and leaving the marina into that narrow channel.



The community organised to oppose the development. Being one of the official objectors allowed GFS to maintain an interest in the proceedings and ensure we had a “seat at the table”. GFS attended the conciliation conference and donated to the fighting fund to support legal costs. We made submissions regarding our views.

Our sincere thanks must go to Ballanda Sack, an experienced land and environment solicitor and member at Lane Cove 12 Ft Skiff Club, who steered the community effort and represented us at the hearing, at significant personal sacrifice. The hearing lasted two weeks in September.

After careful analysis, the judge decided the adverse visual and heritage impacts of the proposed marina expansion were sufficient to refuse the appeal.

However, the judge considered the navigation risks created by the development were low and were insufficient to refuse consent. This was not the outcome we were hoping for and will result in some reflection on what might have been done better. For anyone interested, the court decision can be accessed [Here](#).

We do not know what the developer will do next. It might give up (though I doubt it, given the eye watering amounts that must have been spent in legal fees so far), it may appeal this decision to the NSW Court of Appeal or it may start all over again with a fresh development proposal. We will have to wait and see.

So, in the end, we lost the battle on the navigation issues but won the war because development consent was refused. GFS should take it as a win.

STOP PRESS - on 13 January the applicant filed a notice of intention to appeal. This does not necessarily mean that they will appeal but it gives them 2 more months to make that decision. ☺ ⚓

Sailing Discussion – Mainsail Trim when the Wind Blows

Tim Fletcher, Editor

This is the first in a series of articles I am planning. The idea is to generate discussion regarding sailing technique. Given some of the winds we have seen lately, I thought this one was an apt topic. I welcome people's thoughts and contributions. I would like for this to be an ongoing section in Humbug.

When the wind picks up on a keelboat, the goals for mainsail trim shift from generating maximum power to **reducing drag** and **managing heel**. If the boat heels too far, the rudder loses effectiveness, and the boat actually slows down. Here is how to depower your mainsail and keep the boat under control in heavy air.

1. Flatten the Sail

A deep, powerful "pocket" in the sail is great for light air but creates too much lift and drag in a blow. To flatten the sail:

- **Increase Outhaul:** Pulling the outhaul tight flattens the bottom third of the sail.
- **Increase Halyard or Cunningham Tension:** This moves the draft (the deepest part of the sail) forward and opens up the trailing edge (the leech), which helps the boat point higher and reduces heel.
- **Increase Backstay Tension:** This bends the mast, which pulls the middle of the sail flat and opens the top of the sail to let air spill out.

2. Twist is Your Best Friend

In strong winds, you want the top of the sail to "twist" away from the wind. This allows the excess pressure at the top of the mast—where the wind is strongest—to spill out.

- **Ease the Main Sheet:** A slight ease allows the boom to rise, opening the leech.
- **Vang Sheeting:** In high winds, use the boom vang to control the boom's height while using the traveller to manage the angle to the wind.

3. Use the Traveller to Manage Balance

The traveller is your "throttle."

- **Drop the Traveller Leeward:** Instead of easing the mainsheet (which adds depth to the sail), keep the sail flat and move the entire boom toward the leeward side using the traveller.
- **Goal:** Keep the boat at a consistent heel angle (usually around **15–20°** for most modern keelboats). If a gust hits, "dump" the traveller down to stay upright.

4. When to Reef

If you have maximum tension on your control lines and the traveller is all the way down, but the boat is still rounding up or feeling "heavy" on the helm, it is time to reef.

Tip: If you're asking yourself, "Should we reef?", the answer was likely ten minutes ago. A smaller, flatter sail is always faster than a large, bagged-out sail that is dragging the rudder through the water.

Speaking of Twist

To let the top of the sail twist away, you must reduce the tension on the leech.

- **Ease the Mainsheet:** This is your primary "twist" control. Easing the sheet allows the boom to rise. As the boom rises, the tension on the leech relaxes, and the top two battens will swing out toward the leeward side.
- **The "Vang Sheeting" Technique:** In very heavy air, you can pull the boom vang on hard to flatten the sail, then play the mainsheet aggressively. This allows you to ease the sheet to spill air from the top in a gust without the entire sail becoming too "baggy" or deep.

Monitoring the Top Batten

The best way to see if your twist is correct is to look up at your **top batten**:

- **In Medium Air:** The top batten should be roughly **parallel** to the boom.
- **In Strong Air (Overpowered):** The top batten should be "twisted off," meaning it points **outboard (to leeward)** of the boom's direction. This "blades out" the top of the sail, significantly reducing heel.

Using the Traveller with Twist

Think of the mainsheet as your **twist control** and the traveller as your **angle of attack control**.

- In a heavy gust, you have two choices:
 1. **Drop the Traveller:** This moves the *entire* sail away from the wind but keeps the sail shape exactly the same.
 2. **Ease the Sheet:** This increases **twist**, specifically depowering the top of the sail first.
- **The Strategy:** On most keelboats in heavy air, it is better to maintain a flat sail with plenty of twist (ease the sheet) rather than just dropping the traveller, as twist helps the boat "breathe" and handle the vertical wind gradient (the wind is stronger at the top of the mast than at the deck). 

For Sale - Red William \$34,900



Here is the opportunity of a lifetime - a 1975 Sparkman & Stephens 34 footer at a reasonable price - the S&S 34 is a classic bluewater design known for its strength, balance and offshore pedigree - Red William is well known and loved at GFS - winner of many GFS twilight series and the Port Stephen's Regatta - fully equipped and many extras including 30hp Yanmar motor with low hours and Raymarine instruments with digital navigation - in good condition with topsides and deck recently repainted - all enquiries to Hallet Boat Brokers 0450 545 246 🚢 ⚓

Seasoned sailor rates Noakes Sydney Gold Coast as ‘first class-run’

It was one of the coldest, windiest, and most memorable one-tack races we’ve ever done — finishing 1st in IRC Corinthian, 2nd in Division 2, and 6th Overall in IRC — and I’m delighted for it to be shared with the club community, Ian Creak.

Few sailors can lay claim to having completed more than 30 Noakes Sydney Gold Coast Yacht Races. But Ian Creak, owner and skipper of Beneteau 47.7 GWM Pennant Hills, has competed in so many that he is starting to lose count.

Left turn at Sydney Heads

The CYCA and Greenwich Flying Squadron sailor has also competed in around 10 Rolex Sydney Hobarts. But when it comes to deciding whether to turn left or right at Sydney Heads, Creak says his preference is left every time.

“Let’s face it, when you leave Sydney Heads it’s like getting on an aeroplane,” Creak said. “You don’t want to turn right, you want to turn left, you want to go to first class.

“And we say that going to Southport is the first class run. The further up you go, the warmer it is.”

In addition to the “spectacular scenery” experienced during the race and marine life encounters during the race, Creak’s main motivation for doing the Noakes Sydney Gold Coast year in and year out is the weather.

“It’s wintertime [in July] and everyone wants to desperately get out of the house,” Creak said. “And as soon as you leave the heads, it’s like all your troubles and cares flow out through the slipstream of the boat.”



Weather challenges & past results

But it's not all sunshine and calm conditions. The weather can turn bitterly cold and the event is tactically challenging.

“If you get the breeze off the land, and if it's blowing from the southwest, it can get quite cold,” Creak said.

The GWM Pennant Hills (formerly Ausreo) crew have achieved impressive results across their Noakes Sydney Gold Coast career. It helps that Creak is familiar with the journey. He has sailed the east coast of NSW for more than 30 years.

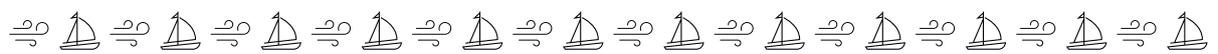
Notably in 2022, the yacht placed first in IRC Division 3 and Corinthian IRC and third in ORCi Division 2. And last year it placed third in IRC Division 2.

According to Creak, GWM Pennant Hills was on track to win its Division on IRC in the 2024 race, but they drew the short straw when it came to wind strength in the second half of the race.

“We were doing really well halfway through the race and said, ‘We've got this in the bag. We are done, we are sorted. All we need to do is to get to the finish line.’ What could go wrong?” Creak said. “And we sailed out [further offshore] and consequently the breeze dropped out. We were stuck out there in panic. That's the beauty of racing. We love the journey just as much as the destination.”



This year marks the 37th edition of the 384nm race from Sydney to the Gold Coast, Queensland. The race was on Saturday 26 July 2025.



GFS Sponsors

Helly Hansen



Helly Hansen is a company manufacturing professional grade gear. It offers technical sailing and performance ski apparel, as well as premium workwear. The Company provides clothing and footwear for sailing, hiking and other outdoor activities.

Joe Walsh Rigging

Joe Walsh Rigging specialises in all marine and architectural rigging, masts and spar fabrication, repair, painting, all rigging requirements, furling systems and AYF Rig Insurance Inspections. Located at Woolwich Marina.



Doyle Sails Sydney



Doyle Sails Sydney is in Gladesville. Services include an in-house design team, laser cutter and modern machinery for new sails, repairs, covers and ongoing service.

Oatley Wines



Robert Oatley Wines celebrates the memory of Bob Oatley through a trio of labels: the maritime-influenced Signature Series, the specific vineyard focused Finisterre, and the best of the best barrels under The Pennant label. They focus on wines from Margaret River and McLaren Vale.

Zjoosh ZJOOSH

Located in Lane Cove, Zjoosh is a unique Australian lifestyle brand. It specialises in "the finishing touches". From its early beginnings as a fashion jewellery and accessories brand, Zjoosh has now broadened to homeware and gifts.

GWM Pennant Hills

GWM Pennant Hills is a family-owned business that has been operating at the same location at Thornleigh, since 1984. The business has maintained a strong association with GFS for over 20 years. GWM offers a modern and dynamic range of electric vehicles (EVs), hybrids, SUVs, Utes, and FWD vehicles.

